

White Paper Report

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Purchasing Storage Furniture to Rehouse and Make Collections Accessible

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The National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) received \$175,000 from the NEH to support preservation of its humanities collections following a natural disaster. The grant's goals included purchasing and installing new storage furniture and environmental and light monitoring equipment, creation of an Integrated Pest Management System, moving the artifact and library collections to a new facility, and updating and restoring documentation and cataloging of the artifact and library collections.

On June 13, 2008, Cedar Rapids, Iowa experienced unprecedented flooding. Eight feet of water inside the NCSML buildings created massive destruction, leaving broken windows and doors, inches of mud covering everything, heavy exhibit fixtures flipped upside down and walls blown out. Prior to the flood, the NCSML was known for its excellent original exhibitions and international exhibition program, having built a partnership over 13 years with the National Museum of the Czech Republic, and other national and international museums. The two temporary galleries used for these exhibitions were destroyed as well as the NCSML's permanent exhibition, Homelands. In all, the five buildings owned by NCSML were so damaged that they could not be occupied.

Of major concern immediately following the flood was the removal of the undamaged artifact collection items to safe, dry storage. Within days, undamaged collection items were placed in several temporary locations in the city. Over the next year, collection items were moved several more times as temporary spaces were needed for other purposes. In December 2009, the artifact collection and the undamaged library collection were moved into a storage facility leased by the NCSML. The HVAC and security systems were updated to provide professional storage conditions for the first time since the flood. This arrangement allowed for the artifact collection to be unpacked, inventoried, and checked against the Past Perfect database by the Collections Manager. In the beginning of 2011, the library collection was inventoried and checked against the shelf list.

Recovering from a disaster of this proportion is a monumental task but the NCSML staff and board of directors created immediate, mid-term and long-term plans that guided the recovery. It was decided early on that the NCSML wanted to make decisions that resulted in improved operations in the future, and just not short-term fixes. The board also reemphasized its intention to rebuild in the Czech and Slovak ethnic neighborhoods where it stands. The presence of the NCSML is critical to the long-term revitalization of this historic area. The final decision was to save the building and incorporate it into the design of an expanded museum and library after moving it to a new higher foundation. A two-story addition was included to expand the capacity for exhibitions, programs, collections care and storage.

The new 50,000 sq. ft. building features a permanent exhibition doubled in size; a 5,500 sq. ft. library and archives; a multi-purpose educational programming space; two galleries for temporary exhibitions; a 55-seat theatre for films, lectures and programs; separate secure storage areas for both library and artifact collections; underground parking for 65 vehicles; and LEED certified energy efficient design resulting in projected energy savings of 50% over the base energy code of Iowa.

This project addressed two separate but related collections at the NCSML – artifact (12,000 items) and library (34,000 items). Together they are the strongest and most complete historical collection on Czech and Slovak history and culture in the United States.

The artifact and library collections support humanities-related research, education and programming, especially in the arts, history, world languages, and traditions that shaped our diverse cultural heritage. In particular, humanities themes and topics such as art, history, ethics and literature are addressed through the story and culture of the Czech and Slovak people worldwide. The preservation and interpretation of these collections is vital because the NCSML is the only professional institution in the United States that actively collects, preserves and interprets artifacts related to the history and culture of Czechs, Slovaks, and Americans of Czech and Slovak descent. This rich heritage is an important part of the overall American story and identity. The artifact collection was fully cataloged before the flood using PastPerfect software. The PastPerfect database was updated to allow for wider accessibility and to increase the use of the collection by humanities researchers, especially after five years of lost access.

The library lost complete physical and intellectual control of its materials due to the flood. At that time, 10,000 items were cataloged in MARC format and available on the online catalog with worldwide access through the OCLC WorldCat bibliographic database. After the flood the online catalog was no longer supported by the company, thus a new online catalog software system was purchased and installed. Immediately after the flood the library assistant was laid-off and the library director was the only library staff person. A part-time library collections manager was hired in 2011 to help unpack the undamaged materials. However, until the online catalog was fully functional, the cataloged materials were not accessible to those outside the museum. A cataloger was also hired to start these efforts before the move and to continue afterwards - critical to sustaining the collection.

The NEH grant was approved for purchase of the storage furniture. Other aspects of the project not funded by the grant included the purchase of environmental and light monitoring equipment, creation of an Integrated Pest Management System, updating of the PastPerfect collection database, the actual move of the collections, and library cataloging.

Bids were sought for the storage furniture, with the bid being awarded to OSDI Spacesaver, an industry leader with a record of quality and reliability. The Spacesaver system features:

All American sources for steel,

Mobile storage rails set in concrete during construction,

Anti-tip rail assembly of 1045 bar stock steel welded into the center of a C-channel base,

Dual flange guidance system with precision machined and balanced wheels permanently lubricated ball-bearing assemblies, machined and balanced wheel and bearing assembly to ensure synchronized wheel rotation,

Line shaft drive system provides a state-of-the-art wheel assembly which incorporates a highly-engineered ductile iron wheel and custom load distributing bearing assembly,

Standard profile welded steel carriages for minimum capacity 1,000 lbs. per linear carriage foot,

Mechanical assist carriages with continuous, full-length drive shaft driving all 5" double-flanged, roller guided drive wheels on one side of the carriage,

Shelving of 22 gauge cold rolled steel with powder-coated paint, and

All components of the system are manufactured at the factory in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

The artifact storage area is on the second floor of the new wing of the museum. It is 3,574 sq. ft. which allows for 33% growth in accessions. The specified storage equipment consists of a combination of Spacesaver frames, drawers and shelves. Large furniture pieces and trunks are stored on large low shelving within the mobile system. Small 3-dimensional items such as toys, dolls, jewelry and decorated eggs are stored in trays and boxes. Large textiles are rolled onto acid-free tubes, wrapped in a layer of Mylar, and supported on cantilever frames on mobile carriages. Most textiles are stored in archival boxes that are placed on the shelves. Framed pieces and other large hanging items are hung on art storage racks. Archival materials and works on paper are stored in acid-free drop-front boxes with interleaving papers and, in some cases, acid-free mats. Oversized paper items are housed in flat file drawers.

The new library is 5,329 sq. ft. with storage of materials in two areas. The public area features 1,422 linear feet of shelf space for English-language materials, genealogy resources, current periodicals, and reference works. The secure collection area has high density mobile shelving units with a capacity of 7,374 linear feet of shelf space allowing for 33% growth of the collection. Boxed archival materials, bound periodicals, the phonograph record collection, foreign language books and rare items are kept in this room of 1,481 sq. ft. The shelving is specified to allow for different sizes and configurations of materials in a compact arrangement. Flat file cabinets store large-format materials such as maps, posters and dress patterns.

The environmental specifications for the storage areas are designed to meet accepted museum standards at an ideal 65 degrees temperature and 45 percent humidity. Data loggers are used to monitor the temperature and relative humidity of the areas that house collections, including the collections storage area, closed stacks in the library and the public exhibit and library spaces. Light levels are within the recommended 1 to 5 foot candles and UV inhibiting. Task lighting at 30 to 60 foot candles is available. Light meters are used to record the actual amount of light on or near collections items to insure proper levels are maintained. The collections storage areas are locked and allow only select staff members access.

An integrated pest management (IPM) strategy has been arranged. The main elements of an IPM program involve preventing access to pests, monitoring pest populations, identifying potential pest threats, and treating outbreaks in the safest manner possible. As of yet, no pest problems have occurred.

The move of the collections was accomplished over several months in 2012 and 2013. Library materials were packed by staff and volunteers and then moved by a local moving company. Some were installed in the public reading room prior to the opening of the new NCSML in July 2012. Rare books and other pieces were moved to the closed stacks during the remainder of 2012 and early 2013.

As part of the plan for the move, artifacts in need of stabilization or repair were identified and treated. A work plan was devised with a timetable and key tasks identified. Artworks of Kansas City, a fine arts mover with years of experience moving museum items and art, packed the artifact collection and handled the physical transport of the artifacts. The process of packing and transport took 4 people two days. The artifact collection was moved to the new collections storage area in October 2012. The Collections Manager and Curator have spent 5 months organizing the artifacts and updating PastPerfect.

The NCSML implemented a library automation system that combines library searching, cataloging, serials management, acquisitions, circulation, reporting and management into one integrated system. NCSML library visitors and staff are able to search the library collection through any workstation with a web browser from within the museum and through the Internet.

The NCSML's past cataloging efforts have utilized the AACR2 standard for materials description. When cataloging activities resumed, the NCSML adopted the new Resource Description and Access (RDA) standard. Built on the foundations established by AACR2, RDA provides a comprehensive set of guidelines and instructions on resource description and access covering all types of content and media.

The entire Museum, offices, exhibit areas, kitchen & program areas are all served by a mix of high efficiency geothermal heat pump systems (constant and variable air volume). Energy recovery is used in all areas where energy can be

recovered from the exhaust air streams of the building. All of the HVAC systems are controlled by a Building Automation System (BAS). The critical areas for collection storage and exhibit galleries have the ability to run when the building loses main power by having those HVAC systems tied to the building's emergency power back-up system. The exhibit areas are served by high efficient ground source heat pump units (RTUs) mounted on the roof.

The custom integrated security system facilitates the monitoring and control of targeted security locations. These locations include but are not limited to exhibit galleries, staff areas, office areas, stairways, common areas (hallways), IT rooms, library, museum store and parking area. The custom integrated security system was implemented via three (3) main sub-systems: Closed Circuit Television System, Intrusion Detection, and Access Control.

The Skala Bartizal Library opened to the public on July 15, 2012. From that time until the end of the grant period (August 31, 2013), the library has seen 6,447 visitors, provided educational programs to 1,430 students and answered 948 reference questions. The library is open to the public six days per week.

Other accomplishments include:

Cataloger and cataloging intern added or enhanced 5,990 catalog records in the online catalog.

Cataloger and cataloging intern hid 4,500 catalog records for flood-damaged or missing books from public view in online catalog

Library staff, interns and volunteers created or updated finding aids / inventories for specific collections:

Journal title and item-level holdings spreadsheet

Journal duplicate list

Phonograph records inventory

Piano rolls inventory

English language book duplicate list

Library staff created or updated content for library section on NCSML website; pages for using the library, about the collections, genealogy and for donating library materials.

Library staff created exhibits for new library display cases

Library intern created a Czech and Slovak genealogy primer

Library staff created or updated library-specific forms, policies and procedures.

An oral history traveling exhibit, Leaving Czechoslovakia, was displayed in the library

The artifact collection was instrumental in the planning and opening of the new permanent exhibition, *Faces of Freedom: the Czech and Slovak Journey*. *Faces of Freedom* opened in June 2013 and features over 200 artifacts that tell the story of the Czech and Slovak people, their struggles against political oppressions and their roles in

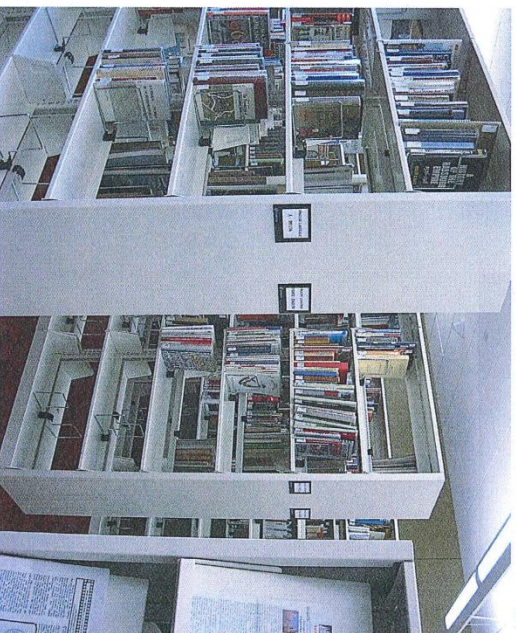
the New World. Artifacts have been loaned to other institutions, including the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. Researchers have traveled to NCSML to study the textile collection.

The collections continue to increase. 2012 saw 170 new accessions, and accessions in 2013 have already surpassed that number. The new storage furniture allows for years of collection growth and the new facilities ensure artifacts and library materials will be properly cared for.

Closed stacks



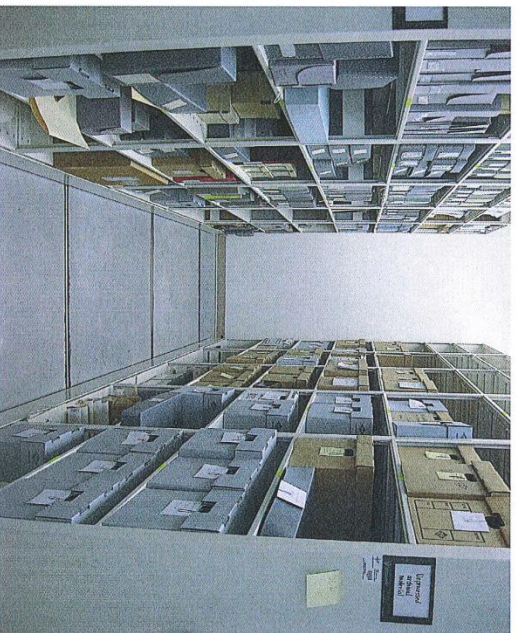
Library reading room shelving



Closed stacks



Closed stacks



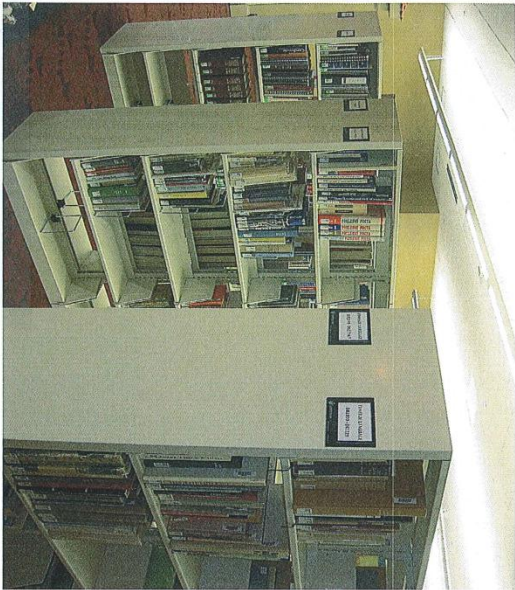
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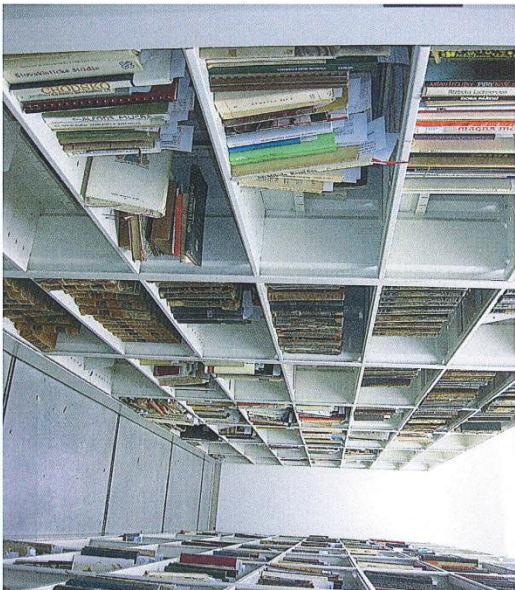
Closed stacks



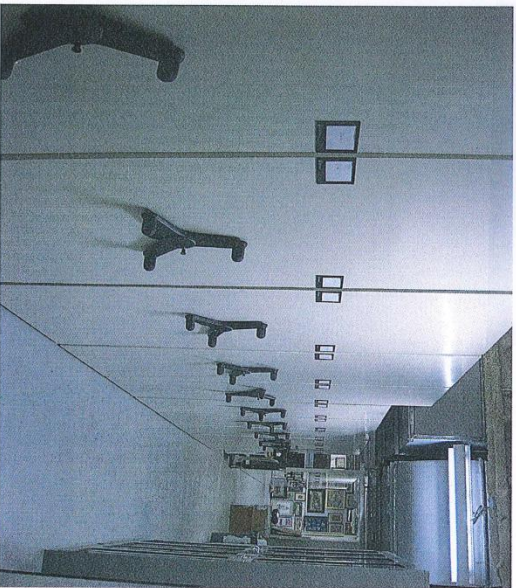
Library reading room shelving



Closed stacks



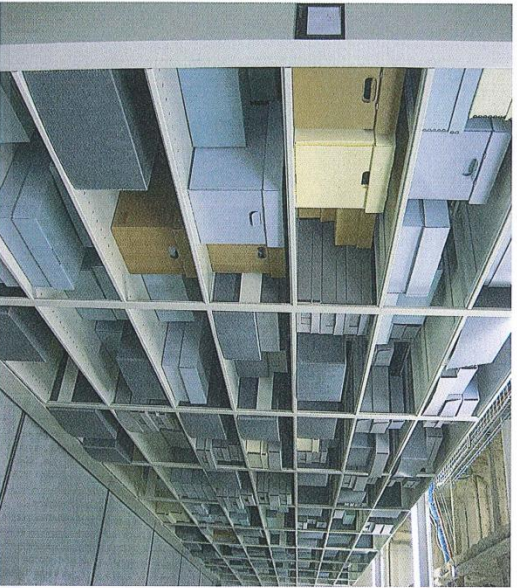
Artifact compact shelving



Art storage

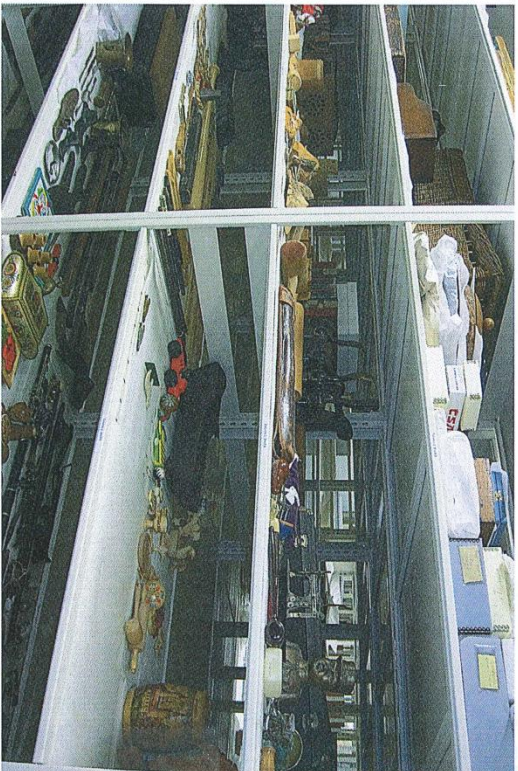


Artifact storage

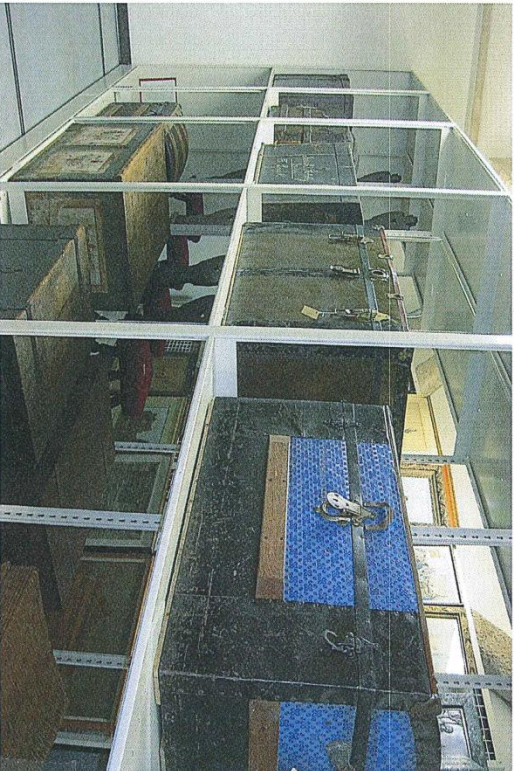


Artifact storage





Artifact storage



Artifact storage